

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present application. Claim 1 has been amended and new claim 19 has been added. No new matter is added. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated April 20, 2005.

Examiner Telephone Interview:

The courtesy extended by Examiner Patrick H. Cathey II to applicants' representative during the July 12, 2005 telephone conference is gratefully appreciated. The substance of such conference is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claim Objections:

Claim 1 is objected to due to the Examiner's assertion that "the sentence in claim 1 stating *in order from an object side thereof and in the direction of said front-end insertion section to said camera head* continues to be unclear as to the meaning and limitations of the claim."¹

It is respectfully submitted that such language has been deleted from claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of this claim objection is respectfully requested.

¹ Please see page 2 of the Action.

As to the Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner sets forth the following rejections:

1) claims 1 and 3-18 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Igarashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,902,232) in view of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,588,948);

2) claim 2 stand rejected under 35 USC. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Igarashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,902,232) in view of Takahashi et al. (US Patent No. 5,588,948) and in further view of Igarashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,954,634).

Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, now calls for an objective optical system that forms an image of an object, a relay optical system that relays the image formed by the objective optical system, an imaging optical system that forms an image of the relayed image and a solid-state image sensor that receives the image formed by the imaging optical system, and wherein said camera head includes a part of said relay optical system, said imaging optical system and said solid-stage image sensor, and wherein the relayed image is in the camera head and a field mask is disposed at or near the position of the relayed image, and wherein said front-end insertion section and camera head are detachable.

That is, a field mask is arranged at or near the image formed by the relay optical system in order to clearly define the view field. In the structure defined in claim 1, the positional

relationship between the field mask and the image sensor is stable even when the insertion section combined with the camera head is changed or rotated. This is because the rear part of the relay optical system, the field mask, the imaging optical system and the image sensor are all in the camera head. If the image position of the relay optical system is outside the camera head, the field mask will move relative to the imaging optical system and image sensor when the insertion section is changed or rotated. This movement will appear on the TV monitor screen.

The stable image is advantageous for the observer's easily viewing the images.

In Takahashi, the operating/holding section 3 does not include a part of the relay lens and therefore, the image formed by the relay lens is not inside the operation/holding section 3. In Fig. 1 of Takahashi, the relay lens 6 is apparently in the insertion section 2 and the image of an object is formed in the last lens of the relay lens. Lens 9a (or 9b) forms an image of the image on the CCD 11a (or 11b). However, these lenses correspond to the imaging optical system in claim 1, not a part of the relay optical system.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that neither reference, Igarashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,902,232) or Takahashi, discloses the features of claim 1 concerning *said camera head includes a part of said relay optical system, said imaging optical system and said solid-stage image sensor, and wherein the relayed image is in the camera head and a field mask is disposed at or near the position of the relayed image, and wherein said front-end insertion section and camera head are detachable.*

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.116
Attorney Docket No. 010680
Serial No. 09/893,677

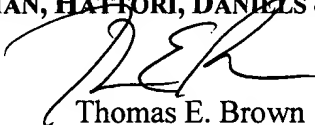
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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